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## ABSTRACT

Provided are papers from a convention session involving the Knowledge Production and Utilization (KUP) committee of The Association for the Gifted (TAG). Papers included have the following titles and authors: "Vitalizing Educational Theory--Consistency with Modern Biopsychology" by R. Callaway; "Principles of Order--Metaphysics and the Education of the More and Less Gifted" by P. Kuntz; "Summary of Percept and Theory in Educational Research" by H. Lee; and "A Philosophic Manifesto for the Gifted Person in Contemporary Culture" by V. Ward. (SBH)

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Epistemology and Curriculum:

Explorations Toward the Differential Education of Gifted Youth

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A Symposium

for

The Association for the Gifted

at the

Fifty-fifth Annual International Convention, Council for Exceptional Children,

Atlanta, April 11-15, 1977

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,  
EDUCATION & WELFARE  
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Virgil S. Ward, Professor of Education, University of  
Virginia, Symposium Chairman: "The Symposium Concept"

Papers

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (1) Ragan Callaway, Department of<br>Special Education, Ontario<br>Institute for Studies in Education | "Vitalizing Educational Theory:<br>Consistency with Modern<br>Biopsychology"           |
| (2) Paul G. Kuntz, Professor of Philo-<br>sophy, Emory University                                     | "Principles of Order: Metaphysics<br>and the Education of the More and<br>Less Gifted" |
| (3) Harold N. Lee, Emeritus Professor<br>of Philosophy, Newcomb College,<br>Tulane University         | "Percepts, Concepts and Theoretic<br>Knowledge"                                        |

Let us grant that as intellectual labor is divided at present, it is not philosophers but substantive experts in areas of practical concern who have primary competence in making value judgments. If we believe that conceptual analysis can be of practical importance in clarifying substantive issues, then this hard and fast distinction between philosophers and substantive experts must be abandoned. We must be willing to see philosophers acquire relevant substantive expertise and experts acquire considerable philosophical sophistication. Analytical philosophers should continue to leave the "deep, unanswerable" questions at rest, but they ought to concern themselves with questions which will be answered in practice with or without their help, when they have something to add to the search for a secure and reasonable answer. --Leonard J. Waks, 1969.

EC 100 771

A Proposal for a TAG Committee

by  
Virgil S. Ward,  
Professor of Education,  
University of Virginia

April 8, 1976

THE KPU CONCEPT

The problems of knowing - ranging from the nature of human perception, memory, and mental organization through the methods of observation and inquiry - have since earliest civilizations intrigued the philosopher and then the scientist. The rapid advancement of developmental and behavioral sciences in contemporary times, abetted by both unparalleled technological capabilities and complexities in social organization, have brought into play the concept of "information" science and such emergent bodies of thought as the sociology of knowledge.

Research is an important concept and function in the sector of American education and behavioral science. Support, as is continuously remarked, has never been more than a shadow of what is needed. In the light of advancing sophistication in methodology and diversity among social interests and cultural patterns, broader viewpoints upon the research enterprise are being urged. Abraham Kaplan, Conduct of Inquiry; Lee Cronbach and Patrick Suppes, Research for Tomorrow's Schools; National Society for Study of Education, Philosophic Redirection of Educational Research are instances where a re-examination of educational research is urged in various ways, even as more support is sought and a more efficacious utilization of research and theory in educational thought and practice.

The organizational objectives of TAG include the advancement and dissemination of knowledge about gifted and talent persons. And many committees touch upon particular aspects of the knowledge base that is available. The initiation of a committee directly in keeping with the developing realizations in regard to the problems of harnessing information and shaping it toward more effective utilization in all problem areas bearing upon human potentialities will put TAG in the forefront of CEC divisional structure and parallel to the future orientation of learned societies and other prestigious professional associations. Thus, the present proposal for a new committee.

EPISTEMOLOGY AND CURRICULUM: EXPLORATIONS TOWARD THE DIFFERENTIAL EDUCATION  
OF GIFTED YOUTH

The Symposium Concept

by

Virgil S. Ward, Professor of Education, University of Virginia

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This convention session is an activity of the newly established Knowledge Production and Utilization (KUP) committee of The Association for the Gifted (TAG). The papers to be presented explore in respective ways the potential of philosophical perspectives for improving and reforming the knowledge base in Differential Education for the Gifted (DEG), from which ground work emanates both the further advancement of understanding through inquiry, and the educational provisions for variously talented youth in the American school.

Several aspects of this rather extensive interest as it has eventuated today give rise to the need for a wider involvement of scholarly and scientific disciplines. The knowledge base, critics say, in part because spread over this expanse of time, is "loose and suspect;" and neither the typical curricular concept, nor the incorporation of such concepts and practices into designs, has reached a state sufficient for valid and gratifying programming. So repetitious and non-generative is the conceptual store, that the methodological conventions themselves (search for typologies; dichotomous thought as in "acceleration" versus "grouping") appear unlikely to suffice the needs that are apparent. Thus, a quest after different sources, and different modes of observation and analysis appears very much to be indicated.

Under the principal substantive designation of "epistemology and curriculum," the topics to be treated by the distinguished presenters in the symposium -- each recognized for considerable achievement in his respective field -- represent an endeavor on the part of the KPU committee to bring into reach of the active community of curriculum specialists and research investigators within the ranks of the Association, certain exploratory thought on the part of scholars accomplished in areas of inquiry not yet sufficiently brought to bear upon the quest after a more fulsome embodiment of the social and educational obligation toward the positively exceptional youth of this and future generations.

# Vitalizing Educational Theory: Consistency With Modern Biopsychology

Ragan Callaway, Ph.D.

## Summary

It is becoming clear that some of the more "classic" theoretical notions found in virtually all current textbooks on education have been made obsolete by new findings in biology and such disciplines as linguistics and infant form perception. One of the keystones of learning theory, the equipotentiality premise, has been invalidated by basic research. The equipotentiality premise states that every act of learning is fundamentally like every other act of learning. Saddled with this premise, there has been no room in education for special-purpose waves of maturation facilitating certain kinds of learning, especially at certain times in early development.

There are at least two important species-specific waves of maturation that have little in common with the massive, more or less homogeneous wave we show on our graphs and try to measure with our IQ tests. One enables the child to acquire his first language; the other enables the child to acquire vital information through visual and auditory patterns. The three-year-old resolves a level of intrinsic complexity in the area of syntax and other facets of language, according to most linguists, that the most intelligent adult would not be able to resolve, if for some reason he had to learn these rules and relationships as an adult rather than as a child. What must be postulated is some kind of "biological shortcut" to knowledge which enables the organism at certain periods of development to resolve rather specific complexities by means other than general intelligence. Under these conditions we might well want to see what would happen in a reading experiment with three-year-olds, or even two-year-olds, as children of this tender age are quite advanced in language and form-perception.

Since 1974, every junior kindergartener (4 years old) entering the Kingslake Public School in North York, a Borough of Metropolitan Toronto, has been involved in an individualized reading program. The results so far indicate that all levels of intelligence benefit from this experience. In the population that feeds the Meadowbrook Public School in Newmarket, Ontario, more than 20 children, whose ages range from 18 months to 4 years, are being taught to read at home by their parents under the supervision of a public school employee. The overall progress in both experiments is exceeding all expectations among those involved.

Facilitated capabilities that require learning are often called "innate open schemas" by ethologists. Although preprogrammed gene action creates the open schema, appropriate environmental input must "feed the schema" in order to release further gene action, if the learning is to occur. Open schemas characteristically remain open for only a relatively short period of time. If the appropriate input is not forthcoming during that time, the organism may find it difficult, if not impossible to learn what would have been easy to learn. It is suggested that in nature's provision of open schemas for language acquisition and form perception, she "inadvertently" provides a sensitive period for learning how to read.

The idea that "good" education may produce better brains is a common idea among brain researchers and geneticists. The term "euphenics" was coined in 1963 to conceptualize this idea. Although no curriculum is presently based on euphenic principles, these principles are nevertheless with us and begging to be utilized. In my opinion, early reading for all ability levels will play a central role in any future euphenic plans for education.

"PRINCIPLES OF ORDER: METAPHYSICS AND THE EDUCATION OF  
THE MORE AND LESS GIFTED."

Presented at:

55th Annual Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children.

World Congress Center

Atlanta, Georgia

April 11-15, 1977

Paul G. Kuntz  
Professor of Philosophy  
Emory University

"PRINCIPLES OF ORDER: METAPHYSICS AND THE EDUCATION OF  
THE MORE AND LESS GIFTED."\*

The basis of a curriculum must be the broadest conception of the world and man, that is, a metaphysics. In the plurality of different philosophies (and religions) there seems to be one common denominator: that man inhabits a cosmos and is endeavoring to understand its order, to express its beauty, to establish a society that will be an enduring order, which is a just and merciful order, to which people can devote all their energies through many institutions.

Metaphysics as a theory of order has the advantages of deep grounding the ancient myths of all mankind, not only the creation out of chaos in Genesis but the cosmic order of the Vedas grounded in rta (and developing in dharma and karma) but too, the Way of the Chinese, especially the Tao Te Ching, and exemplified in yang-yin. There is a common core, just as our ancestors claimed, who based our society on "nature and nature's God."

A theory of order provides a basis for a curriculum that is religious, logical, scientific, artistic, and moral. I will say a word, too, about the balance between what Plato called mousike and gymnastike.

In logic there is a well-developed theory of relations. Order, at least serial order, is a defined term: a relation that is transitive, asymmetrical and connected.

In science, there are many orders, but particularly regularities called "laws." There are not only causal sequences, but fundamental cycles, balances, hierarchies, all grounded in the fundamental epistemological harmony that no two true propositions can contradict one another.

In art we introduce the contrast of variety to unity, the chance

elements that compliment the plan that seems necessary; we admit even the challenge of chaos to order involved in every great myth of creation.

In morality we have the long search of men to establish a lawful society, one that exempts no one from the law and binds all to due process. Most difficult is the tension between equal rights and opportunities for all and the need of leaders who, in their search for excellence, must establish a hierarchy. I believe Jefferson solved the problem by education open to all but establishing an "aristocracy of virtue and talent." His concept of the highest in society was in terms of service rather than inherited wealth and position. Resolving the tensions between equality of opportunity and inequality of talent and achievement is most difficult, but resolvable in Jefferson's terms.

Balance is yet another ordering principle, deeply rooted in homeostasis of the body, and a principle required of all animals to live in equilibrium with their environment and with each other. On this principle I end because a good curriculum overcomes the false dichotomy between mind and body. A good curriculum is not only religious, logical, scientific, artistic, moral, it is also encouraging of play, sport, competition, and recreation.

\*Session 241, C. E. C., Thursday 14, April, 1977. Epistemology and Curriculum, Virgil S. Ward, Chairman. 55th Annual Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children, World Congress Center, Atlanta, Georgia

Knowledge is not a commodity that can be produced according to a formula. Its production and utilization should not be separated in educational research. There is a legitimate distinction between theory and practice but no separation. Theoretic and factual knowledge form a continuum in which there is no break or separation. At one end of the continuum, theoretic knowledge is predominantly conceptual; at the other end, factual knowledge is predominantly perceptual; but concepts cannot be understood apart from percepts; percepts cannot be understood apart from concepts; and neither can be understood apart from motor activity. Concepts are general, and are abstracted from percepts, which are specific. Empirical meanings are general, but they refer to percepts. Theoretic knowledge is compounded of meanings. Therefore, empirical theory that is not faithful to its perceptual basis is only pseudo-theory. Genuine theoretic empirical knowledge consists of the principles of successful practice. The stimuli that elicit actions and responses become symbols of the habits and anticipations set up by those responses, and in becoming symbols, acquire meanings. Gifted children are capable of acquiring a large vocabulary early in life, and in doing so, acquire a large stock of concepts. The curricula and the teachers of such children should aid the process of acquisition, and display the way that the theoretic principles operate in the process of education.

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# A Philosophic Manifesto for the Gifted Person in Contemporary Culture

(A session concept in initial form, intended at the discretion of the Knowledge Production and Utilization Committee of TAG, for a symposium proposal, CEC-TAG, 1978 convention, Kansas City.)

by

Virgil S. Ward, Professor of Education, University of Virginia  
Chair, KPU Committee

## Organizer

Virgil S. Ward, Professor of Education, University of Virginia

## Concept of the Symposium

The "manifesto" is intended as a direct expression of value -- appreciations, needs, frustrations, hopes; responsibilities and privileges -- on the part (imaginary) of the gifted person (youth, adult) in contemporary society (nationally delimited, or universal scope, as in UNESCO statements), with particular emphasis upon education. The direct expression, as from the beholding eye of the gifted person herself -- thus hypothetical -- is expected to range selectively over the principles, needs and standards made manifest over the years through professional studies, and policies and action initiatives of advocate organizations like CEC-TAG, NAGC, AAGC, GCSNJ, with discrepancies between where we are and where we want to be comprising the occasion for the enunciation of a "need" or a "right". (E.g.: "I am a musically apt -- so I'm told -- person, ten years old, living in Yuma, Arizona: And I have a right to access, during the school day, to a wide range of musical experiences, including learning about and of the more esoteric instruments ...;" "I am a young adult, recipient of an attractive scholarship offer from Harrad University: But I am not ready for advanced academic work; need a year or two for finding myself apart from books credits and teachers: Who will help me against an "establishment" Father who threatens to disown if ...")

The philosophical note in the anticipated title for the proposed session (symposium, debate) derives from the organizer's lengthy and current predilection toward a review of everyday educational affairs, and the conventional yield of empirical inquiry, through the disciplined methodological uses of the unaccustomed field of philosophy. The substance of the observations thus arrived at is provided with another ordering framework, through the conventional divisions within philosophic thought, conventionally inclusive of the axiological (value, ethic) the logical and the epistemological. (Metaphysics not generally treated.)

**Format**

Briefing Paper 1 (12' minutes): The Axiological View of Differential Education for the Gifted: LSD, North Dakota Community College

Briefing Paper 2: The Logical View of DEG (Richard Pratte's Public School Movement (McKay, 1973) a direct precursor.

Briefing Paper 3: The Epistemological View ...

Alternative possibilities for the remaining portion of a two or three hour session:

- A. Skilled discussion leadership for small sub-group continuations of each respective briefing paper.
- B. Case Study (one or two) of a funded project (closed; in progress) as a "hard test" for the notion that the philosophic view of what we customarily think and do, changes our concepts, and accordingly our initiatives (Newsome, G., 1970).

**Significance**

With due and sizable appreciation for the progress in DEG made in a half century of endeavors, including the present historic moment of possibly unparalleled popular enthusiasm, some informed and responsible critics suggest that we are recycling in the '70's the problems initially experienced in the '20's. Both the methodological or instrumental value of an unaccustomed view (paper on philosophical analysis as methodology, now in progress), and the substantive matter derived from a responsible but applied utilization of that view, appear to be promising in a test of the degree and kind of progress in DEG made in fact, and as to possible redirection of our initiatives (Title, 1972 Yearbook, Part I, NSSE: Philosophical Redirection of Educational Research).

The anticipated session is foreseen as an advancement of the purposes of the KPU committee in service to the Association, notably in that realm of differences between its objectives and activities and those of the research committee. The academic year 78-79, or the calendar year 78, is accepted roughly as the second year in the life of this new committee with a three year limit for the application of the "sunset" provision integral to the proposal for the new working group.

**Procedure**

Following the proper nomination of a committee membership (Ward suggesting; Sisk naming), and subject to that committee's reflection upon the general suggestions that may derive from the concomitant inquiry (Ward memo 3-18-77 to TAG Executive and Committee Chairs), proposal guidelines for the Kansas City convention will be pursued.